

SMOKE SIGNALS

Winter 2016



Administration Message

Happy New Year to All!

On behalf of the entire Village of Indian Head Park Board of Trustees we wish you all a Happy New Year! We hope your holiday season was filled with joy and that 2016 will be a healthy and happy year for all.

We have been busy throughout 2015 with our goal of continuous improvement in our Village. Our new Village Administrator, John DuRocher, has been very active in his first months with the Village Staff and Board of Trustees with many initiatives, including the following:

- Selection of a new legal services firm
- Selection of a new engineering services firm
- Presentation of new asset management plan for short and long-term needs in the Water and Sewer Department
- Creation of new water rate structure to improve the financial management of the Water/Sewer Department, ensuring operation under sound financial metrics and funding for short and long-term infrastructure projects
- Selection of vendor for codification of Village Ordinances
- Creation of RFP for Audit Services – currently in work
- Review of vendors to provide website design and hosting services
- Creation of Communications Committee to help shape the way we improve communication in our Village.

As we have discussed in previous Smoke Signals and at our recent VBT and Town Hall meetings one of the most pressing Village issues is adequate funding for the maintenance and operation of the water and sewer system. We do not currently receive enough money from water and sewer system revenues to fund our operating costs and capital needs, which are necessary to help replace our aging water pipes and equipment. Here are some facts for your review:

- 86% of our water mains are more than 40 years old.
- In 2015, we pumped approximately \$100,000 of unbilled water due to system loss from leaks, water main breaks, and other infrastructure-related failures. Just last month we discovered - and repaired - a leak on Shabbona of 5 gallons a minute.
- There are 5 critical projects that need to be completed that total close to \$1.9 million.
- Two of the most critical projects are the replacement of water mains on Shabbona and Blackhawk. These water mains are currently fixed through annual patching as leaks occur, which is not a feasible long-term maintenance strategy.

Effective January 1st, the Village Water and Sewer Department will institute a water and sewer rate increase. This rate increase will be further detailed in this edition of Smoke Signals and on our Village website. This change will not affect Indian Head Park residents that are served by the LaGrange Highlands Sanitary District.

Water customers will be receiving a letter detailing the increase in the next few weeks, and the increase will be effective on water bills for all water used after the January 2016 meter readings. This water increase will provide approximately \$335,000 in capital each year to fund capital projects for the water and sewer department. Please feel free to reach out to John DuRocher if you have any questions regarding this increase, or join us at the next Village Board Meeting on January 14, 2016.

Your Village Board of Trustees continues to work to improve the Village of Indian Head Park. While we understand that any rate increase has a financial impact on those affected, please understand that increased rates now will ensure strong financial positioning for the future reliability of our system. The VBT is excited to continue our work in 2016 and want to invite you to participate in the process—whether it is through attendance at VBT meetings, participation in Village committees, or a simple email to a Trustee. We want to hear from you!

Trustee Amy Jo Wittenberg

WATER AND SEWER RATE INCREASES

Current Indian Head Park residential water rates are \$10.05 per 1,000 gallons of water used. Sewer rates consist of a fixed rate of \$3.20 per month plus 60 cents per 1,000 gallons of water used. Note that about 15% of our residents receive their water and sewer from the LaGrange Highlands Sanitary District and are billed separately by them via invoices and on their property tax bill. *This article applies only to residents billed by Indian Head Park.*

The Village obtains its water from Lake Michigan, via the City of Chicago, through the Village of McCook and finally the City of Countryside, into the Village of Indian Head Park water main distribution system. Our water system consists of a pump station, 500K gallon underground reservoir, a back-up well, and 16+ miles of pipe. The water rate pays for operating and maintaining the Indian Head Park water system and for the water Countryside pumps to us.

The sewer rate pays for operating and maintain the 14 miles of pipe which make up the Indian Head Park sewer system. Residents also pay a separate property tax to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago for sewage treatment.

Unfortunately, our internal analysis (confirmed by the University of North Carolina) shows that the fees collected by Indian Head Park are insufficient. They cover most, but not all, of our operating expenses. They do not cover the \$350,000 in infrastructure repairs needed each of the next 10 years.

After months of discussion, town hall meetings, consulting with property owners, both single family residential and multi-family residential, the Village Board at its December 10th meeting voted to increase water and sewer rates for those receiving Village water and sewer services. Again, the Village communicated this to its residents via multiple meetings, newspaper articles, and several postings on its website.

The Village decided to add a service availability (fixed rate) charge for both water and sewer users in addition to the use charge. It eliminated the minimum use charge. Revenues generated from the service availability charge will be used for capital expenses and not operational expenses.


This means that every property receiving water and sewer services will pay a fixed fee to the Village no matter how much or how little water they use. This will be reflected in the water/sewer bill.

The new water rates for single family and single family townhomes will be \$10.90 per thousand gallons used plus \$33.00 per month service availability charge. Sewer charge will be \$0.60 per thousand gallons plus \$11.00 per month service availability charge. Overall a family using 4,000 gallons per month will see a total increase of \$44.20 per month. Residents of condominiums will have a slightly different rate structure. This structure has been communicated to the respective condo associations.

Sample Water Bill Before Increase

VILLAGE OF INDIAN HEAD PARK
201 ACACIA DRIVE
INDIAN HEAD PARK, IL 60525

FROM: 07/01/15 TO: 07/16/15



PRESORTED FIRST CLASS U.S. POSTAGE PAID PERMIT NO. 203

AMOUNT

9012	9160	14800	S RESIDEN	18.48
9012	9160	14800	W RESIDEN	148.74

Prev Bal 22

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

AMOUNT DUE	ACCOUNT NUMBER
167.44	000-000-00
PENALTY DATE	PENALTY AMT DUE
08/18/15	192.52

RETURN THIS STUB WITH PAYMENT

*Service period is for 92 day(s). *

PENALTIES WILL BE APPLIED TO PAST DUE WATER BILLS

DATE	AMOUNT DUE	PENALTY DATE	PENALTY AMT DUE
08/17/15	167.44	08/18/15	192.52

Acct: 000-000-000 (B)


VEHICLE STICKERS ARE PAST DUE POLICE WILL TICKET CARS WITHOUT CURRENT STICKERS

RESIDENT SOMEWHERE IN INDIAN HEAD PARK IL 60525

Sample Water Bill After Increase

VILLAGE OF INDIAN HEAD PARK
201 ACACIA DRIVE
INDIAN HEAD PARK, IL 60525

FROM: 03/01/16 TO: 03/16/16



PRESORTED FIRST CLASS U.S. POSTAGE PAID PERMIT NO. 203

Usage 14800 gallons

Water use charge	\$161.32
Service availability	\$ 96.00
Sewer use charge	\$ 8.88
Service Availability Charge	\$ 30.00

Total \$296.20

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

AMOUNT DUE	ACCOUNT NUMBER
\$296.20	000-000-00
PENALTY DATE	PENALTY AMT DUE
03/18/16	\$340.63

RETURN THIS STUB WITH PAYMENT

*Service period is for 92 day(s). *

PENALTIES WILL BE APPLIED TO PAST DUE WATER BILLS

DATE	AMOUNT DUE	PENALTY DATE	PENALTY AMT DUE
03/17/16	287.20	03/18/16	330.28

Acct: 000-000-000 (B)

VEHICLE STICKERS ARE PAST DUE POLICE WILL TICKET CARS WITHOUT CURRENT STICKERS

RESIDENT SOMEWHERE IN INDIAN HEAD PARK IL 60525

From the new(ish) Village Administrator:

Four months ago, I was appointed to be your Village Administrator. I am pleased to be part of the Indian Head Park community and the team at Village Hall. I come to the Village with 27 years in local government management, all in Illinois. I started my career in the late 1980's next door in the Village of Burr Ridge as an intern. After that, I served as the administrator for three other units of local government. I have a Master's Degree in Public Administration with local government management as my specialty. I am married (26 years) with two kids, well actually they are adults. I am also a Veteran, having served in the U.S. Navy as an officer.

What the Village Board and I see as important to the Village is transparency in local government and conducting the business of the community as evenly and cost efficiently as possible. We are a small community without a great deal of financial resources. This forces me to be creative in my thinking in looking for ways to be even more efficient in ways we provide services to you. If you have an idea about how we can do something better, please let me know.

Much has happened since I came on Board. We have a new Village Engineer, Tony Spinelli of Strand & Associates, a new Village Attorney, Patrick Brankin of Schain Banks, and a new Director of Finance/Administration, Erica Stewart. (Erica also has a Master's Degree in Public Administration.) She was promoted from our utility billing department.

My door is always open, so if you have a comment, a concern, or a suggestion (especially having to do with our water rate increase), please feel free to give me a call at Village Hall. I can be reached at 708-246-3080 x104.

John J. DuRocher
Village Administrator

Heritage Center Announcements

The Heritage Center has an ongoing book sale during the weekend hours. Books for sale can be found on the table inside the back door.

The Heritage Center is in need of a docent for the fourth Sunday of each month. The hours are 12:00 to 3:00 pm. If interested please call or email Jean Southerland at 708-768-4500 or jeansoutherland@gmail.com.

Coming to you in 2016... a new Indian Head Park website!

After considerable research and due diligence the VBT has decided to proceed with the website vendor CivicPlus. CivicPlus has for the past 20 years been designing and supporting more than 2500 municipal websites. A few of their Illinois clients received 100% transparency ratings by the Illinois Policy Institute, which is a goal of our new website. The VBT's focus is to provide a comprehensive, transparent website for our residents where information is readily available and information of interest is automatically sent to the recipients. Residents using mobile devices will be able to download a custom Indian Head Park app with key functionality at their fingertips.

What we need now is your input. We want the website to represent the best of what Indian Head Park has to offer. We are looking for volunteers to provide ideas, feedback and good photos of the people and places in our community.

If you would like to be part of this exciting project contact Trustee Heidi Lopez at hlopez@indianheadpark-il.gov. The project team will convene in January with an anticipated go-live time frame sometime in the late spring or early summer of 2016.

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee is looking for new members who are interested in improving and updating Village communications to residents. The Committee's plan is to establish a resident email database to more quickly communicate with residents on Village matters and upcoming Board meetings. A new website for IHP is in development that will allow residents to "opt in" with their email addresses to receive news from the Village and its departments. If you are interested in joining the Committee, please send an email to Trustee Rita Farrell Mayer at rfarrellmayer@indianheadpark-il.gov or Trustee Heidi Lopez at hlopez@indianheadpark-il.gov. All are welcome. The next meeting of the Communications Committee will be scheduled in January 2016 and the date will be posted on the IHP website.

It has come to our attention that some IHP businesses and residents have not been receiving copies of Smoke Signals through the mail. We need to provide those addresses to the Post Office to make sure that all residents and businesses receive Smoke Signals. If you know of anyone who is not receiving the newsletter, please call the Village Hall at 246-3080 and let us know.

Congratulations Ray. Our Village is proud of you!

Last November the Countryside Police Department requested assistance in locating a missing 10-year old autistic boy. Approximately 20 minutes later our Chief Ray Leuser located the boy near 55th and LaGrange Road. In a letter to our Mayor Countryside Chief of Police Joseph Ford wrote:

"Chief Leuser responded with urgency and professionalism which helped prevent what could have been a tragic situation. He should be commended for a job well done. Please take a minute to thank him."

TRADING POST

Alterations...

Experienced with silks, woolens, ultrasuede, leathers, hems, zippers, etc. Heirloom christening gowns designed from mother's wedding gown. Call Jean (708) 246-6635.



White Sox Fans!

We have season tickets and are looking to add to our "splitters" group. Two seats in Section 28, Row 18 with a parking pass for the premium lots. 1st base side straight up from the on-deck circle. Since there are 81 home games we sell them in blocks of 9, 5, 4. We hold a draft in March where you get to pick your games. Contact Steve at 630-240-3139.

Dog Walking/Pet Sitting

Experienced and insured dog walker and pet sitter who has the love of animals and the outdoors. I have been a resident of Indian Head Park for over 13 years. References are available. Please contact Liz @ 708.927.2671.

Upcoming Village Board 2016 Meeting Dates
January 14 • February 11 • March 10
Meetings start at 7:30 pm at the Village Hall

Smoke Signals is published quarterly by the Village of Indian Head Park to inform its residents of on-going activities in the Village and the ever-growing plans for the future in the pursuit of better government and good citizenship. Circulation is 2,000.

Editor is Trustee Rita Farrell Mayer. News for the next issue is due by March 11 and should be submitted electronically to: rfarrellmayer@indianheadpark-il.gov.

Full page ads - \$200.00, 1/2 page ad - \$125.00, 3 1/2 "x 3 1/2" size ads - \$75.00, Business Card size ads - \$45.00, Trading Post ads - \$20.00 (no commercial ads - the ad will run two times at no cost, then a \$20.00 charge).

Extra copies and back issues (up to one year) of *Smoke Signals* can be obtained at the Village Hall.

VILLAGE OF INDIAN HEAD PARK

201 Acacia Drive, Indian Head Park, IL 60525
 708 246-3080

www.indianheadpark-il.gov

Office Hours

Mon., Tues., Wed., Fri. 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
 Thursdays 9:00 am to 7:00 pm

Mayor:	Tom Hinshaw	
Trustees:	Heidi Lopez	Chris Metz
	Glen R. Mann	Brenda O'Laughlin
	Rita Farrell Mayer	Amy Jo Wittenberg
Village Clerk:	Laurie Scheer	
Administrator:	John DuRocher	
Police Dept.	Non Emergency	246-4534
	Emergency	911
Fire District	Non Emergency	352-9229
	Emergency	911

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